

formed from either an electrically insulating material or a material that is electrically floating, [of said process chamber], the perforated plasma confinement ring comprising:

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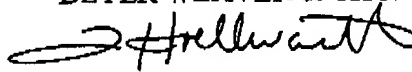
a conductive ring having an inner periphery dimensioned to surround said bottom electrode in said plasma processing reactor such that a portion of the inner periphery is positioned between planes that define the top and bottom of said bottom electrode when said conductive ring is surrounding said bottom electrode, said conductive ring being configured for placement in its entirety at or below a top surface of said substrate when said substrate is disposed inside said process chamber for said processing, said conductive ring being formed from [a] an electrical conductor that is substantially resistant to etching by said plasma present within said chamber during said processing[, said conductive ring being] and electrically grounded during said processing so as to increase ion energy in said plasma by removing electrons from said plasma through said conductive ring, said conductive ring having therein a plurality of perforations, said plurality of perforations being dimensioned to permit by-product gases from said processing to pass through while substantially confining said plasma to the upstream side of said conductive ring.

REMARKS

The above claims have been amended in accordance with discussions with Examiner Hassanzadeh. Accordingly, the Applicant believes that all pending claims are allowable and respectfully requests a Notice of Allowance for this application from the Examiner.

Respectfully submitted,

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